Broad Agency Announcement for Computing Cultural Heritage in the Cloud Researchers
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
BAA – LCCIO20D0112

The Library of Congress has issued a Broad Agency Announcement (LCCIO20D0112) to find and recruit researchers as part of *Computing Cultural Heritage in the Cloud*, a project funded by the Andrew W. Mellon foundation.

What is it?
The Library is seeking to award contracts to four researchers to experiment with solutions to problems that can only be explored at scale. Proposed budgets should not exceed 77,500. These experiments will take place between May 1, 2021 and January 31, 2022.

How much money?
Proposed budgets should not exceed $77,500.

How does the project work?
The Library's intent is to select proposals that represent a diversity of approaches, with the selections aimed at balancing collection areas, research methods, and support needs across the four projects. To help the Library build a rich understanding of the research uses of large scale computational access to library collections, the research may extend across formats including image, audio, web, video, text, and structured metadata. While not all proposals need to address all of these features, the aim is that the four selected will, as a group, include technical questions as well as content-specific questions, and require multiple types of Library collections. Ideally, the Research Experts would represent diverse institutional and non-institutional contexts, and should propose projects that are diverse in terms of their topics, their approaches, and the required collections. Each project should aim to have broad disciplinary and public impact and to make use of computational methods that require large-scale access to collections and computational power.

What are the Program Areas?
Each proposal must describe how it fits within one of the program areas.

A.   Early Stage Exploratory Research
Project that is in a stage that requires a greater degree of exploration and support from the Library than the projects in the other program areas described below. Research Experts in this area might be undertaking an entirely new form of computational project, or might have strong disciplinary or methodological training and a project that supports the goals of this BAA but lack the full range of technical expertise necessary to independently undertake the project and require extensive collaboration with Library staff to answer the research question.

B.   Advanced Topical Research

Project that seeks to address a research question from within artistic, humanities or social science discipline. Projects in this area will attempt to bring a computational method to a particular collection or multiple collections in the hopes of answering a historical or disciplinary question about content within Library collections. Projects in this area might include audio or video analysis to aid in understanding of a particular media genre or historical period. They may seek to understand the publishing or epistolary practices of a particular time or place, or to undertake an exploration of modes of library collecting across form for a particular topic. While computational methods such as text mining, computer visioning, network analysis, or machine learning techniques may be developed or used in these projects, they will also impact scholarly and public understanding of a particular time, place, or discipline beyond the technical or methodological. Projects proposed within this program area should come from researchers who can demonstrate appropriate disciplinary, linguistic, and historical knowledge, as well as technical, data, and cloud computing skills to carry out projects with limited support from Library staff beyond some research support, and information about library data practices. Research Experts in this program may expect some data transformation support from the Library.

C.   Advance Technical Research

Project whose research goal falls within the areas of computer science, information science, human computer interaction, or critical algorithmic studies. The proposed projects in this area may seek to understand or exploit the technical affordances of a given media format (aka WARC, tiff, or MP4). They may also seek to create novel approaches to library metadata to aid in the discovery or use of collections, or to deepen understanding about theories of description and organization of information. Technical exploration projects might utilize, for example, computer vision, machine learning or AI methods across format areas, or connect Library collections data to other large datasets. Goals of these projects will often be the expansion of a particular technical or computational methodology within a field, or to test the applications of technologies within the cultural heritage sphere. Projects proposed in this program area must demonstrate offeror has and can provide appropriate technical, data, and cloud computing skills to carry out projects with minimal support from Library staff beyond explanation of Library data practices.

What materials will be made available to researchers?

Any digital material held by the Library of Congress, as allowable by copyright law, can be considered for inclusion in this project. Final approval for inclusion will be made by curators, the Office of General Counsel, and other Library staff.

Can the award be given to teams, or only individuals?

The Library will not accept concepts or proposals from organizations or for teaming arrangements. Offerors can sub-contract part of the services to be provided. The Library will have approval over the sub-contracting arrangements and the contract issued will include a sub-contracting clause.

Can the award be granted to individuals outside of the United States?
This BAA is limited to individuals who are citizens or permanent residents of the United States.

Who maintains the intellectual property for the resulting work?
The products delivered under the resulting contract (to include bi-weekly progress reviews, demonstrations or tests, and periodic reporting activities and interviews as outlined in Section 4.2.2.2 of the BAA) ("deliverables") must be made available through a publicly accessible URL for at least five (5) years after project completion. The offeror grants the Library a perpetual, irrevocable, fully paid-up, royalty-free, non-exclusive worldwide license to reproduce, distribute, copy, display, create derivative works, and publicly post, link to, and share, the work(s) or parts thereof. Research Experts retain the intellectual property rights to their deliverables, but are encouraged to make their work product available to the public pursuant to a CC0 1.0 universal license. The products delivered under the resulting contract (to include bi-weekly progress reviews, demonstrations or tests, and periodic reporting activities and interviews as outlined in Section 4.2.2.2 of the BAA) must be made available through a publicly accessible URL for at least five (5) years after project completion and published under a CC0 1.0 universal license. The offeror grants the public an irrevocable, fully paid-up, royalty-free, non-exclusive worldwide license to reproduce, distribute, copy, display, create derivative works, and publicly post, link to, and share, the work(s) or parts thereof.

How do I apply?
To apply, submit a 2 page concept paper by Noon Eastern Time on 11/30/2020**.** Directions for what to include in the concept paper are described in Sections 4.1 of the BAA (link). Concept papers will be evaluated by the process described in Section 5.1 of the BAA. A subset of applicants who submitted concept papers may be invited to create full proposals. Directions for creating full proposals are in Section 4.2 of the BAA. Selections for award will be made by the process described in Section 5.2. The Library reserves the right to not select any of the proposals received.

Do I need to be registered in [SAM.gov](SAM.gov) to be eligible?
Yes. To be eligible for award of a contract resulting from this BAA, you must be registered in the System for Award Management. Instructions can be found on https://www.sam.gov/SAM/. You must provide confirmation of registration.

Where can I find more information or ask for help?
Email your questions to Moji Adejuwon at Loc-BAA@loc.gov. The email shall include this BAA number (LCCIO19D0052) and "BAA Research Expert – Computing Cultural Heritage" in the Title. The Library will provide answers to questions periodically by issuing amendments to the BAA (link). Questions received after 10/31/2020 may not be answered.

The Library will host two online sessions to share information about the BAA and answer questions. These sessions (known as Industry Days) will be held on 10/28/2020 at 1:00 pm Eastern Time and 10/29/2020 at 4:00 pm Eastern Time.